

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – CONGRESSWOMAN SUSAN BROOKS

FIELD HEARING TESTIMONY

Name: **R. LAWRENCE REED, II, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.C.C.**

Title: **DIRECTOR OF TRAUMA SERVICES**

Organization: **INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH**

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Title of Hearing: **“ASSESSING CENTRAL INDIANA’S PREPAREDNESS FOR A MASS CASUALTY EVENT”**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this very critical topic – put very simply, preparedness saves lives. IU Health has a proven history in treating the unexpected, the complex and the unique and does so with the highest standard of patient quality, care and outcome.

Our work by its very nature is frenetic yet requires precision. No two cases are ever the same, yet we remain fully prepared and ready for events that no one wants to acknowledge could happen, let alone see. It’s like having an army primed and ready for a battle you hope you never have to fight.

IU Health is home to two (of only three) Level 1 Trauma centers in Indiana: IU Health Methodist is a verified Level 1 Trauma facility (Wishard-Eskanazi is the other) and Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health is the state’s only pediatric Level 1 Trauma center. This verification comes with immense responsibility and unparalleled dedication. We strive continually to refine, hone and improve our efforts.

Being a Level 1 Trauma center means we have highly-skilled medical talent immediately available on-site 24/7: two trauma surgeons, a full emergency medical team including emergency physicians and nurses, neurosurgeons, orthopedic surgeons, anesthesiologists, critical care specialists and hospitalists – all on-site, day or night, ready to provide immediate specialized care before patients (tens, hundreds or thousands) even hit our doors.

We have the resources: 35 operating rooms; a fully stocked blood bank and critical supplies; our LifeLine fleet of critical care transport, comprised of six helicopters and five bases throughout Indiana; senior administrators throughout the state on-call 24/7 with the infrastructure and ability to immediately call in, or send out, support from sister facilities. In the more than 100 years of Methodist history, we have never gone on diversion for trauma or emergency services, which is very unusual for a private hospital.

Although surge management starts at the scene of an accident, we have elaborate plans in place at the hospital and emergency department should patients show up at our doors unannounced. A 24/7 on-duty team is constantly assessing patient flow and care. And by virtue of being a large hospital with coverage by multiple specialties and resources that many hospitals don’t have, we have experience with the cases that others can’t treat.

Indianapolis is home to major activities, teams and events and IU Health plays a major role in supporting most of these. IU Health is the exclusive healthcare provider to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Lucas Oil Stadium, among others, where we care for thousands of fans each season. Indianapolis hosts sizeable events, including the State Fair, the Super Bowl, NCAA Final Four Basketball Tournaments, big name concerts and numerous conventions, and emergency preparedness is integral to the planning and success of them all. We have a seat at the table in the advanced planning for these major public events and embrace our leadership responsibilities.

But IU Health cannot do this alone. We are proud to be a part of a larger community with an established emergency preparedness system and dedication to the charge. This is where you see the community at its best, as public and private sector resources unite to address and plan emergency preparedness. Planning and innovation has come more to the forefront for the city and state as we work with local agencies, hospitals and government to prepare for the event of a mass casualty – be it a natural disaster, WMD or other. We share a goal and collaborate rather than compete.

MESH has been a valuable partner in leading preparedness efforts, in sharing intelligence and in extending their expertise, and we are fortunate to have a national leader and partner based here in Central Indiana. IU Health is fully committed to supporting the private sector requirements of this partnership and hopes that the funding needed for the public efforts remains in place. IU Health regularly hosts hazard vulnerability assessments, preparedness drills and shares best practices with others in the community. After any major US incident, local or national, we are privy to an after action report and gap analysis which we can use to further refine our plans. IU Health is in constant communication with MESH, other hospitals and partners in our immediate District 5 and throughout the state – all with a united goal of being prepared to offer the best unexpected medical care to patients.

Key Learnings & What is Working Well

Just last week we treated an influx of patients received from an overturned bus accident that involved several fatalities; we reattached a severed hand which can be the difference between a fairly normal life or one of inconvenient and extreme handicap. Following the 2011 State Fair stage collapse, before we could even call in additional resources to prepare for the arrival of many injured patients simultaneously, our staff members were already reporting for work on a Saturday night. We did not have to activate our disaster plan. Our team knew they would be needed and they responded immediately. It was an impressive showing of dedication and commitment...and of typical Hoosier values...as we handled a serious community emergency seamlessly. Other hospitals in Indianapolis – Wishard-Eskenazi, Riley at IU Health, St. Vincent's – also helped manage several of these victims. Because of proximity and our resources, the worst injuries came to Methodist.

IU Health uses its size and scope to help further continuing education and build better relationships. IU Health recently held a training exercise at the IMS to educate first responders, increase standards of care and build better relationships. We were able to present unique and complex cases of our Level 1 Trauma team and better understand first responders' needs of being in the field.

IU Health is a key part of the Indianapolis and Indiana emergency network. We do things no other systems in the state can handle. We appreciate your interest and welcome your continuing support of our efforts to maintain readiness and serve fellow Hoosiers in times of crisis.

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